

the kingdom of Quito, where Luis Daza (1535) met with an Indian of New Grenada, who had been sent by his prince (no doubt the *zippa* of Bogotá, or the *zaque* of Tunja), to demand assistance from Atahualpa, inca of Peru. This ambassador boasted, as is usual, the wealth of his country; but what particularly fixed the attention of the Spaniards, who were assembled with Daza in the town of Tacunga (Llactacunga), was the history of a lord, “who, his body covered with powdered gold, went into a lake amid the mountains.” This lake may have been the Laguna de Totta, a little to the east of Sogamozo (Iracá) and of Tunja (Hunca, the town of Huncahua), where two chiefs, ecclesiastical and secular, of the empire of Cundinamarca, or Cundirumarca, resided; but no historical remembrance being attached to this mountain lake, I rather suppose that it was the sacred lake of Guatavita, on the east of the mines of rock-salt of Zipaquira, into which the gilded lord was made to enter. I saw on its banks the remains of a staircase hewn in the rock, and serving for the ceremonies of ablution. The Indians said that powder of gold and golden vessels were thrown into this lake, as a sacrifice to the *adoratorio de Guatavita*. Vestiges are still found of a breach, which was made by the Spaniards for the purpose of draining the lake. The temple of the sun at Sogamozo being pretty near the northern coasts of Terra Firma, the notions of ‘the gilded man’ were soon applied to a high-priest of the sect of Bochica, or Indacanzas, who every morning, before he performed his sacrifice, caused powder of gold to be stuck upon his hands and face, after they had been smeared with grease. Other accounts, preserved in a letter of Oviedo addressed to the celebrated cardinal Bembo, say, that Gonzalo Pizarro, when he discovered the province of cinnamon-trees, “sought at the same time a great prince, noised in those countries, who was always covered with powdered gold, so that from head to foot he resembled an image of gold fashioned by the hand of a skilful workman (a una figura d’oro lavorato di mano d’un buonissimo orefice). The powdered gold is fixed on the body by means of an odoriferous resin; but, as this kind of garment would be uneasy to him while he slept, the prince washes himself every evening, and is gilded anew in the morning, which proves that the empire of El Dorado is